



HRE USA

Human Rights Educators USA

A national network dedicated to building a culture of human rights.

Respond to: Rosemary Ann Blanchard
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February 29, 2016

History-Social Science Subject-Matter Committee
Instructional Quality Commission
California State Board of Education
1430 N Street, Suite #5111
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Comments and Recommendations for 2014-2016 Draft History-Social Science Framework

Dear Subject Matter Committee:

These comments and recommendations are sent in response to the request for public comment on the proposed revisions to the California History-Social Science Framework, published on the California Department of Education website, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/hssfw2ndreview.asp>. The comment period is open through February 29, 2015. The comments are sent on behalf of Human Rights Educators, USA, a national network dedicated to building a culture of human rights (www.hreusa.net). The principal author of the comments, Rosemary Ann Blanchard is Co-Vice Chair of HRE USA, Associate Professor of Education Emeritus, California State University Sacramento and Adjunct Professor in Peace Studies at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Blanchard also serves as Chair of the Human Rights Community within the National Council for the Social Studies. However, these comments are not submitted on behalf of or as a position of the National Council for the Social Studies.

Sponsor and Endorsers of Comments and Recommendations:

As noted, these comments are offered on behalf of and as the position of Human Rights Educators USA. They have also been endorsed by the following human rights educators and organizations:

Monisha Bajaj, Associate Professor, International & Multicultural Education & Program Coordinator, MA in Human Rights Education, School of Education, University of San Francisco

Susan Roberta Katz, Professor, International & Multicultural Education, School of Education, University of San Francisco

Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Glenn Mitoma, Director
(www.thedoddcenter.uconn.edu).

Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Human Rights Resource Center Director & Adjunct Associate Professor of Law, University of Minnesota

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

Karen Robinson, Human Rights Education and Training Manager, Speak Truth to Power, RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights

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HRE USA is a project of the Center for Transformative Action

Andrea McEvoy Spero, Adjunct Professor, School of Education, University of San Francisco; Former Director of Education, The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, Stanford University

Page Hersey, Adjunct Professor, School of Education, University of San Francisco,

Nancy Flowers, human rights consultant, former coordinator of Amnesty International USA's education program, editor of the University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center's Human Rights Education Series (2000), author of the *Human Rights Education Handbook* (University of Minnesota, 2000).

Pamela Bruns, Former director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) in Southern California From 1996-2002. Volunteer director of the Student Task Force (STF), a high school leadership-training program to promote human rights education and outreach.

Dr. Felisa Tibbitts, Lecturer, Teachers College of Columbia University, Founder and Senior Advisor, Human Rights Education Associates

Overview of Comments and Recommendations:

The 2014-2016 Draft Revision of the California History-Social Science Framework represents a genuine step forward in regard to the incorporation of the study of Human Rights (HR) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) into the core of social studies. It is gratifying to see more specific references to the developments in human rights in the post World War II era as well as recognition of the human rights dimensions of major historical phenomena such as the Atlantic slave trade.

Nonetheless, the revision does not provide for introducing the fundamental concepts of universal human rights early in the education of children and has missed many opportunities to include in world and US history significant developments in International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In places, the framework authors seem to indicate that antecedents of modern human rights awareness should not be noted in earlier periods (See Appendix A, page 842, lines 114-119), a puzzling recommendation.

In the period since the last revision of the History-Social Science Framework, the National Council for the Social Studies has recognized the importance of incorporating human rights education into the core social studies curriculum, in a position statement adopted in September of 2014, *Human Rights Education: A Necessity for Effective Social and Civic Learning – Adopted September 21, 2014* (http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/human_rights_education_2014). The position statement concludes:

The National Council for the Social Studies affirms that Human Rights Education, in both its civil and its humanitarian aspects, is a necessary element of social studies programs and should be integrated throughout the educational experience of all learners from early childhood through advanced education and lifelong learning.

That position statement provides the foundation for the comments and recommendations which follow.

Attached to this memorandum of submittal is a listing of specific recommended edits and comments on text for the Draft History-Social Science Framework, with the specific language of recommendations and with all comments and recommendations identified to the appropriate chapter, page and line of the draft framework. As an introduction to those more specific recommendations and comments, the following summary categorizes the most salient recommendations from HRE USA.

In conducting its final reviews of the Draft History-Social Science Framework, HRE USA recommends the following adjustments:

- The Framework take account of the Position Statement adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies on Human Rights Education [Available online: http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/human_rights_education_2014];
- The Framework chapters establishing the structure, purposes and methodologies for History-Social Science instruction include language which supports building student awareness of human rights issues, as more particularly indicated in the specific recommended edits;
- The Framework be edited to make specific references to human rights and humanitarian law at more grade levels than in the proposed document;
- The development of International Humanitarian Law be more fully developed in the Framework;
- The American contributions to the development of universal human rights and international humanitarian law be included as indicated in the recommendations in the appropriate Framework chapters so that students will be aware of their nation's involvement in the development of these two important areas of international and national law;
- The descriptions of civic responsibility and responsibilities and rights of citizens include reference to support for human rights for all, as well as for specific civic duties of citizens;
- The framework acknowledge the protections contained in the U.S. Constitution which apply to all persons, extending beyond the category of "all citizens" so that students will realize that the Constitution guarantees certain rights to everyone who comes within the laws of the United States;
- The Chapter providing for elective courses in the ninth grade includes a model course in human rights. The suggestion is made that this course be modeled on a course developed by the University of Minnesota's Human Rights Resource Center. A copy of the suggested course is included in the recommended edits. HRE USA offers to coordinate with the H-SS Subject Matter Committee, its staff and other educators and curriculum designers to adapt the Human Rights Resource Center's course to California criteria.

There follow, chapter, page and line specific recommendations and comments on the Draft History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools. HRE USA encourages the Subject Matter Committee to incorporate the recommended edits and additions into the Framework text. We offer our cooperation and assistance in any way that might facilitate this outcome.

Thank you for your commitment to improving California Social Studies Education.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Ann Blanchard

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